

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW  
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INFO AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 03537

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PINS, UR, SCUL  
SUBJECT: AVANT-GARDE ART EXHIBIT OPENING POSTPONED

REF: MOSCOW A-46

SUMMARY: SCHEDULED OPENING OF AVANT-GARDE ART EXHIBIT  
HAS BEEN POSTPONED BECAUSE OF OBJECTION TO RELIGIOUS  
THEMES AND SURREALISTIC TECHNIQUES IN SOME OF WORKS.  
NEGOTIATIONS ARE STILL GOING ON TO DECIDE WHICH, IF ANY,  
WORKS WILL BE WITHDRAWN. END SUMMARY.

1. ANOTHER EXHIBIT OF AVANT-GARDE ART AT THE EXHIBIT  
HALL OF THE MOSCOW GRAPHIC ARTS COMMITTEE WAS SCHEDULED  
TO OPEN ON MARCH 3 (SEE REF FOR REPORT ON PREVIOUS  
EXHIBIT), BUT AT LAST MOMENT OPENING WAS POSTPONED UNTIL  
MARCH 7. EMBASSY PRESS AND CULTURE OFFICERS RECEIVED  
WORD OF POSTPONEMENT ON MORNING OF MARCH 3. OSTENSIBLE  
REASON WAS NEED TO CONSTRUCT ADDITIONAL DOOR INTO BUILD-  
ING TO FACILITATE CROWD MOVEMENT, BUT ARTIST SOURCES  
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TOLD EMBOFFS THAT REAL REASON WAS OBJECTION TO RELIGIOUS  
THEMES IN SOME OF PAINTINGS. ACCORDING TO ONE REPORT,  
OBJECTIONS CAME FROM MOSCOW PARTY CULTURAL COMMITTEE;  
ACCORDING TO ANOTHER, FROM LEADERSHIP OF GRAPHIC ARTISTS  
UNION.

2. REPORTS EARLIER IN DAY INDICATED THAT AT LEAST SOME

OF THE TWENTY ARTISTS WHO HAD BEEN INVITED TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS UNTITLED EXHIBIT PLANNED TO HOLD A COUNTER-EXHIBIT OUTSIDE HALL AT TIME OF SCHEDULED OPENING. EMBOFF WHO HAD BEEN INVITED TO OPENING ARRIVED TO BE TOLD OF POSTPONEMENT. WHEN HE ASKED REASON, ONE OF ARTISTS WHOSE WORK WILL BE IN EXHIBIT, ASSUMING IT FINALLY DOES OPEN, TOLD HIM THERE WAS OBJECTION TO RELIGIOUS CONTENT AND SURREALISTIC TECHNIQUE OF SOME OF PAINTINGS. THIS ARTIST EXPECTS EXHIBIT TO OPEN ON MARCH 7 WITH ALL PAINTINGS ORIGINALLY SUBMITTED FOR EXHIBIT. HE CHARACTERIZED OBJECTIONS AND POSTPONEMENT AS THE "USUAL STORY."

3. THERE WAS NO INDICATION OF POLICE SURVEILLANCE OF AREA AND A STEADY STREAM OF WOULD-BE VISITORS ARRIVED UNHINDERED TO BE TOLD OF POSTPONEMENT OF OPENING. A SUBSTANTIAL NUMBER OF THE TWENTY ARTISTS WAS PRESENT DISCUSSING SITUATION AND WATCHING WORKMEN BREAKING HOLE IN WALL OF BUILDING FOR NEW DOOR.

4. NEGOTIATIONS ON EXHIBIT ARE STILL GOING ON AND ONE ARTIST DESCRIBED THEM AS "CRITICAL." HOWEVER, THERE WAS NO EVIDENCE OF COUNTER-DEMONSTRATION. IN FACT, AS EMBOFF LEFT, ABOUT A HALF DOZEN OF THE ARTISTS HAD BEGUN TO CARRY MATERIAL FOR THE WORKMEN, APPARENTLY WISHING TO SPEED CONSTRUCTION SO THAT IT COULD NOT

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AGAIN BE USED AS EXCUSE FOR POSTPONEMENT.

5. COMMENT: FACT THAT ARTISTS WERE GIVEN FIRM NEW DATA FOR EXHIBIT OPENING NO DOUBT HELPED AT LEAST FOR MOMENT DEFUSE WHAT HAD APPARENTLY BEEN VERY TENSE SITUATION. WE WILL REPORT FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS.  
TOON

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## Message Attributes

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